Schengen: second generation information system SIS II, development. Initiative Belgium and Sweden

2001/0818(CNS) - 07/09/2004 - Follow-up document

This is a progress report on the work carried out by the Commission in the first half of 2004 on developing the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II). It also sets out the timetable for future activities. It is the fourth report presented by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament in accordance with Article 6 of Regulation 2424/2001/ECon the development of the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II). The Council has mandated responsibility for developing SIS II to the Commission, assisted by the SIS II Committeecomposed of representatives of the Member States.

Key issues for the period under review(January to June 2004)**:** these are detailed in the last progress report (SEC(2004)0499).It has to be recalled that the schedule for SIS II is particularly tight, in view of the importance of having an operational system in place in March 2007. Any delay in one stage of the planning would inevitably lead to postponement of the launch of the system. Furthermore, it is important to stress that the modification of the national systems is a matter for the Member States and that SIS II can only become operational if all of the parties involved devote the necessary resources to the project.

Progress: the report discusses the achievements in the period under review, and states that the call for tender for the development and implementation of SIS II was issued in December 2003. The Commission received a sufficient number of tenders – all from major names in the IT industry – to consider that the call for tender will be very competitive. Tenders will be evaluated on their technical merits. Proposals which reach a threshold value of at least 75% on the technical evaluation will be benchmarked. The benchmark consists of a demonstration of key functions of SIS II and a proof of concept. Finally, for those companies reaching at least 50% of the possible score, a financial evaluation will be performed.

In addition, the Commission discusses:

- the documents which contain detailed technical specifications of the future system. One of the documents is a data dictionary which specifies the data that the central system should be able to process. Another document, called use cases, describes the services that will be offered to SIS II users. These documents will be handed over to the successful contractor for the development of SIS II, as a basis for further work on the detailed specifications and design of SIS II;

- Council conclusions of 5 June 2003cite the search for Stolen Cultural Goods as a possible future functionality of the SIS II. The Commission launched a study on the feasibility of this and the Commission services will transmit the final report to the Council and the European Parliament;

- Commission services visited the second site in Austria and considered it as suitable for hosting the Business Continuity system for SIS II. The Council has adopted conclusions on the location of the central part of SIS II in Strasbourg and the Business Continuity system in Salzburg (Austria);

- Commission Services have launched a first assessment on the status of national preparations for linking the National Systems with the central system;

- A call for tender has been launched for the selection of a contractor who will assist the Commission in the acceptance procedure and in-depth quality checks of SIS II project deliverables.

Results expected in the next period (July to December 2004): the call for tender procedure for the development and implementation of SIS II will be completed. Once the contract has been signed, the contractor's first task will be to develop a project master plan - a timeframe for the whole SIS II project. The contractor will start working on the design of the SIS II. This design phase is planned to last until March 2005 and will deliver all the necessary documents which fully describe the SIS II from a technical perspective. In addition:

- in order to reduce the total cost for development and implementation for both SIS II and VIS, Commission services will endeavour to maximise the synergies between both systems. A study was commissioned in May to identify all possible synergies.

- the Commission plans to submit the proposals concerning the SIS II legal basis by the end of 2004.

The Commission goes on to describe its project management and the activities of the Board and the Team, and the SIS II Committee Meetings. With regard to risk analysis, the Commission states that the major risks to be managed for the moment are (1) the risk of not reaching an agreement within due time on the migration and integration scenarios, (2) implementation of functional requirements in addition to the ones identified in June 2004, which would increase total project duration. Risks are managed by taking the appropriate risk mitigation measures and by authorising changes to requirements only after a thorough evaluation of the impact on the project.

With regard to data protection, one of the major requirements identified in the report of the Joint Surveillance Authorityis the existence of a legal basis for SIS II which would accurately describe the project objectives and scope, and contain the necessary guarantees on data protection. The Commission intends to propose such draft legal instruments.

The Commission concludes that over the last six months no additional delay has been incurred in the project. The next major milestone is the conclusion of the contract for the development and implementation of SIS II. The months after contract signature will be devoted to the design of

SIS II and require a tight control of the contractor's work.

It is important to remember that the success of the SIS II project does not depend solely on the Commission but on all the parties involved in this ambitious project. This calls for a high degree of mobilisation at all levels, particularly as regards the national preparations by the countries that will participate in the new system.